

# Hatchery Highlights

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Iron River NFH News and Updates



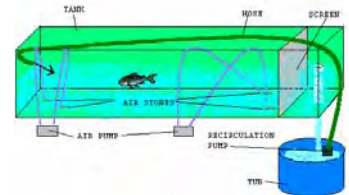
Spring 2005

**Topics this month:**

- \*Marking Coaster Brook Trout
- \*Community Service Help
- \*Retiring Brook Trout Brood
- \*Tagging Fish
- \*Stocking Fry in Whittlesey Creek
- \*Experience Works Helpers
- \*Heavy Equipment Training
- \*Fishing Expo
- \*High School Helpers
- \*Surplus Equipment
- \*Friend's Group Walk

### OXYTETRACYCLINE USED TO MARK COASTER BROOK TROUT FRY

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery, with assistance from Frank Stone of the Ashland FRO, has completed the marking of all of the production Coaster Brook Trout fry for 2005. The oxytetracycline marking was administered in lieu of a fin clip marking because the fish were too small, less than one inch in length, to accurately clip. A recirculation bath treatment was completed on each of our three tanks; two tanks of Siscowit Bay strain fry and one of Tobin Harbor strain fry. The fish were exposed to a 700 parts per million solution of Oxytetracycline for an 8 hour period in a recirculation bath treatment. The absorption of the oxytetracycline by the fish will make a permanent mark on their bones. As the fish grows and adds new bone there will always be a yellow spot or ring from when the fish was marked. If a biologist catches that fish later they can extract the otolith (inner ear bone). When the otolith is exposed to ultraviolet light the Oxytetracycline mark will glow yellow. The presence of this mark distinguishes a wild fish from a hatchery fish. The fish that were marked will be stocked into specifically selected tributaries on Lake Superior. The purpose of these stockings is help fisheries biologists to determine the best way to initiate the restoration of a naturally reproducing population of Coaster Brook Trout in its native waters.



### YOU WANT FRY WITH THOSE?

On Wednesday May 25<sup>th</sup> approximately 70 tagged adult Coaster brook trout and 20,000 Coaster brook trout fry were transported from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery to be stocked into Whittlesey Creek. With assistance from the Ashland FRO, Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and the Wisconsin DNR the brook trout fry were carried up to the main stem and north fork of Whittlesey Creek and stocked over a 1 to 2 mile stretch on both streams. The Fry were around 1 inch long and 4 months old. The adults were released along the lower stretches of Whittlesey Creek. The adult brook trout were between 6 and 7 years old and ranged from 14 to 20 inches in length. Of the adults 19 fish have radio transmitters implanted into their body cavities and all have yellow floy tags placed near their dorsal fins. The radio transmitters broadcast a signal that identifies a specific fish and can be traced to give its general location. The floy tags have a specific number printed on each one and information to contact the Ashland FRO. If someone were to catch a tagged brook trout or find a tag they can contact the Ashland FRO and relay pertinent information about the fish and give them the tags information.

### IRON RIVER NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY PARTNERS WITH BAYFIELD COUNTY

A verbal agreement with the Bayfield County Sheriffs Department, allows Iron River National Fish Hatchery to function as a work site for persons required to perform community service. In March and April 2005, the hatchery provided two individuals an opportunity to complete a total of 150 hours of community service work. All manner of tasks were assigned and successfully completed. Specific tasks included all types of cleaning, organizing storage areas, yard maintenance, window washing, and general labor. This has been a very successful partnership to date. The Hatchery benefits from the free labor while the County has an additional work site to send folks to complete their community service requirements. The Hatchery plans to accept additional community service worker assignments as available for the remainder of the year.

### EXPERIENCE IS WORKING



The Iron River National Fish Hatchery has a new member on their team! Duane Simpson began employment thru a Wisconsin Senior program called Experience Works in May 2005. Funding is provided by the State of Wisconsin Senior's program, previously known as the Green Thumb Program. He will average 20 hours a week. Duane has made a full circle from past to present. His parents owned land that became part of the hatchery when Duane was born in 1934, so he spent much of his early life on the property. He has been assisting with fish culture duties and

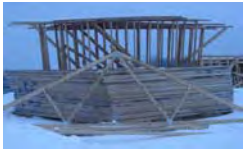
helping staff get ready for the summer's tourists. We are hoping that he will share stories of the past, so the entire staff will be better historians.

## INEXPERIENCE IS WORKING—TOO!

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery has another new member on their team! Last month we were joined by a 71 year old gentleman. In June, sixteen year old Katie Jardine joined our staff for the summer. Funding is provided by the State of Wisconsin thru a program hoping to “teach” young people good work ethics and employment skills. She will be working 40 hours each week for 11 weeks before returning to South Shore High School in the fall. She has been assisting with fish culture duties and helping staff get ready for the summer’s tourists.



## TRUSSES ANYONE?



In April 2005, Iron River National Fish Hatchery successfully auctioned 80 –twenty foot trusses to area citizens. After receiving no interest from advertising them as surplus federal property, and by completing the required paperwork, a sealed bid auction was held to remove them from storage at the Hatchery. The trusses were left over from temporary structures that were built over the production raceways to protect juvenile lake trout during demolition of the air filled domes, and construction of the new metal buildings. The sealed bid auction was a great success. It helped off set the original purchase cost of the trusses, and made some local citizens very happy.

## BROOK TROUT RETIREMENT PARTY



Several local inland lakes in Northwestern Wisconsin were recently stocked with large, beautiful, coaster brook trout. Approximately 200 trout, averaging 3 pounds each, were released. Staff from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery loaded the trout at the hatchery and planted them in Wanoka and Perch lakes. Before release, each fish had a fin removed for hatchery identification. The stocking was performed because the broodstock rearing facility is filled and younger fish of the same strain are stepping up to take over their elders responsibilities. The need for broodstock reductions occasionally occur at the hatchery and stocking is both beneficial to the fish and to the local community.

## A LITTLE LIFT

As maintenance man John Anttila rapidly approaches his retirement date, the staff at Iron River NFH are trying to soak up 20 years worth of knowledge! As a certified heavy equipment trainer, John helped to get the staff up to speed on the forklifts, tractors and other equipment at the hatchery. For some it was a refresher, but for others it was very informative. Videos on safety were watched first to prepare us for what not to do while operating the equipment and then John went over the basic maintenance and proper use of the equipment. John was on the construction crew who built the hatchery over 20 years ago and was hired on as soon as it was completed, so his knowledge has been irreplaceable, especially during construction of our new buildings. We will soon be finding out just how much we don’t know about this place!

## A WALK WITH FRIENDS

For the monthly Friends of Iron River NFH meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>, members and interested people were given a walking tour of the hatchery property so they could get ideas of how it could be developed for public use. During the walk, visions of cross country ski trails, hiking paths and outdoor education sites were dancing in their heads! The newly formed group is excited about having events to make people aware of the untapped resource of the hatchery property and using it to create a place for the public to get out and explore. The meeting was attended by several new people interested in what the group will be doing. These newcomers added fresh ideas to the group’s plans, so hopefully we will be seeing them again!

## TRAVELING FISH SHOW



On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Iron River NFH attended the Trout Unlimited Fishing Expo in Ashland, Wisconsin for the third year in a row. Nice weather didn’t keep some of the determined fishermen and women from the fly-tying, equipment and artwork auction, chili and desserts! This annual event helps the local chapter of Trout Unlimited raise funds for local restoration projects and increases public awareness of local environmental issues. The hatchery set up a booth with a contest to guess the number of fry in a tank, fish anatomy quiz and live yearlings and brood stock. The fry guessing contest stumped young and old alike as they looked at the tank of “baby” fish, trying to count or taking wild guesses as to how many fish were actually in the tank.

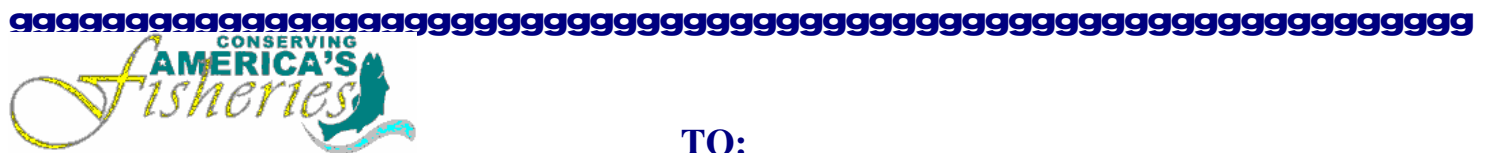
## COASTERS FOR CORMORANTS

Crews from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery participated in a collaborative effort to try to understand the impact of fish predation by double-crested cormorants. Biologist Steve Redman and the “clipper crew” traveled to the Red Cliff Tribal Fish Hatchery to mark coaster brook trout. With the assistance of the hatchery folks, we successfully adipose clipped and coded wire tagged 11,000, 4 inch trout. The small wire tag, which is inserted into the nose of the fish, contains information as when and where it originated.

When the fish reached 6 inches, (about 1 month after they were clipped and tagged), they were transported from Red Cliff and released into the Pigeon River on the Grand Portage Tribal Reservation. Tribal crews will then begin monitoring large islands that are known roosting sites for the cormorants. Equipped with hand held devices that detect coded-wire tags, crews will attempt to cover the entire island looking for evidence left behind from the birds and once found, detecting any presence of a tag. This knowledge will assist biologists studying the impact these birds are having on the local fisheries



The fish are placed in an anesthetic solution to reduce the stress of clipping and tagging.



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